

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW #466-1

with

Loraine Yamada (LY)

July 26, 1993

Honolulu, O`ahu

BY: Holly Yamada (HY)

HY: This is an interview with Loraine Yamada at Porteus [*Hal*] at the University of Hawai`i at Manoa in Honolulu, Hawai`i, July 26, 1993. The interviewer is Holly Yamada.

I'd first like to ask you about your parents.

LY: Oh, they are both gone, but you mean you want to know where they came from? Or . . .

HY: Yeah, when did they immigrate to Hawai`i?

LY: Oh, gosh. I think it was about 1917 or thereabouts. They came from Okinawa.

HY: And, did they live in Maui first? Came to Maui?

LY: Yeah Maui—I mean they all landed in O`ahu first because the immigration station is here, and then they go to their different islands where their [plantation] contract was, I think. I think that's how it worked. And they went to Maui first, and from there they went to the Big Island. And then they moved to O`ahu, and they spent the rest of their life here in O`ahu.

HY: What did your father [*Genshin Ishikawa*] do on Maui? He was a [*plantation*] contract worker?

LY: He did work in the plantation for a short while.

HY: Do you know which one?

LY: I really don't know.

HY: That's okay, whatever you can remember.

LY: Yeah, and then, I know when they went to the Big Island they were with Honoka`a Sugar [*Company*] for a while, and then they moved to Honomu—

that's where I was born.

HY: What year was that?

LY: Nineteen twenty-seven.

HY: Okay.

LY: So, after me---I was not quite three when we moved to O`ahu. And the rest of the family, which is one brother and three sisters, were born in O`ahu.

HY: And you would be the fifth child, is that right?

LY: I was, let's see, one, two, three, four, yeah that's right.

HY: Okay. Did your mother [*Matsu Kaneshiro Ishikawa*] also work?

LY: Yeah, well, she worked in the plantation, too. From what she told me, they used to take their babies to the fields and put them in a little basket, and worked in the fields along with the other mothers, yeah. And that was just for a little while. Once she moved here, she never worked in the plantation.

HY: Did she work at all?

LY: (Yes), she was a poultry farmer. Both of them.

HY: Okay. So that was three years after you were born?

LY: (Yes.)

HY: So it would be 1930.

LY: Right.

HY: Okay. Do you know what it was that made your parents move from Maui to the Big Island?

LY: I think my mother's three brothers and her father was already living on the Big Island and I guess they wanted to be close (together). My dad had no relatives in Hawai`i, but my mother did. So, they moved to the Big Island.

HY: And what was it that made them move from the Big Island to O`ahu?

LY: Well, my father was not---he just didn't want to be a laborer. He said---I think he has a brighter future in O`ahu so he came here. But he had---they started the poultry farming, but he was also a tailor, he was a barber, a contractor, and what else. . . . On the Big Island, see, just before he left he was a cab driver from what I hear. And so he thought opportunities were greater on this island.

HY: So he began his own business in poultry farming?

LY: Yeah. Even the barber yeah, he had his own barbershop.

HY: Do you remember the name of his barbershop?

LY: Wai`alae Barbershop.

HY: Wai`alae Barbershop. And where was it?

LY: (Laughs) And it was right on Wai`alae [*Avenue*], between Wai`alae Store, and we had a Wai`alae Service Station, and right between those two buildings there was this small little barbershop (laughs).

HY: And, how long did he have that for? Were you . . .

LY: Maybe not too long. I think my father tired easily of everything. He was like a jack-of-all-trades, master of none (laughs). Because I remember when I was in elementary school [*Wai`alae School*] when he had the barbershop, and by the time when I was in intermediate school [*Kaimuki Intermediate School*], I know he was contracting. He built the homes in Wai`alae Ranch. And it still---oh, I don't know if they tore it down, but few years back when I went to look, the houses were still standing, yeah.

HY: Did he have the poultry farm and the barbershop at the same time?

LY: Mm, hmm [yes]. So my mother took care of the chickens.

HY: So that was mainly her job?

LY: Mm hmm, yeah.

HY: And where was the poultry farm? Was it . . .

LY: Right there in Wai`alae.

HY: And was it---did you live on the farm?

LY: We all did.

HY: What street did you live on?

LY: (It) was called `Aki`aki Place. And it's still there. Of course they became fee-simple lot.

HY: Can you describe the house and the farm?

LY: Oh yeah. It was a two-story house, three bedrooms and a big living room

upstairs. And one small room was the entire shrine—you know the Buddhist shrine with the altar and everything. Then downstairs we had another three bedrooms, and another living room, big dining room, and a kitchen. And bathrooms were always outside. So we had a big patio between the bathhouse and the main house, yeah.

So, I remember my mom you know. I think she was going through menopause. Now I can recall because she said she's always hot. She would take a bath, and she would. . . . And you know, the old folks, no hesitation, no modesty about showing their body. It used to make me sick, you know. (HY laughs.) She would put on her underwear, she'd put her big towel around her waist, but she'll sit on the bench in the patio, (where) the whole family passe(s) by, you know, with her breast(s) exposed and she's fanning herself. She did that until almost the day she died, until she was bedridden. Because when I came to visit her after I got married, I had all my children, and they lived in Kalihi then, yeah. I'd go visit. . . . She'll take a bath, she comes in the living room—she lived with my brother and his wife—same thing with her breast(s) exposed, she don't care who's over there, you know, and (she'll be) fanning herself.

I said, “Oh for heaven's sakes! Go into the room and put on some clothes!” It's so funny.

And she said, “What?”

I said, “You think, you have---look at your breasts!”

(Laughing) She would say, “So what?”

And I said, “It's ugly that's why, go put on---cover it up!”

Oh, I tell you she was so funny, but most of the old ladies were like that—you know the first generation. I guess it was part of their culture, they all bathed together. But we were---the children were all so private. We . . .

HY: Different from . . .

LY: Real different. Extremely different (laughs).

HY: What about the farm? What was it like?

LY: We had a big property, and the farm itself was right on the same premise as the house. The residence right there, and the coops were all lined up, you know the chicken coops, and the hatchery, because we used to incubate the eggs, and raise the chicks to all the different stages till they became stewing hens (laughs).

HY: Who did you sell to?

LY: We marketed our eggs, and our fryers, and roasters, at that time, to Star Market. There was a Star Market right here in Mo`ili`ili, by the park.

HY: Oh yeah, it's still there.

LY: Yeah, it's still there. That's where we used to market. Plus there was another Chinese market. I can't remember the name. Pretty close to that Star Market. And on Sundays, we would take all the live chickens and the eggs to `A`ala Market where they had open market for walk-in traffic. Yeah, we did that. And we would also send in our eggs to Star Market, and we had our regular customers—mostly in the Kaimuki district. Tuesdays and Saturdays was egg-delivery day, yeah.

HY: Would the kids deliver?

LY: Mostly, yeah, my brother and myself.

HY: Would you go house-to-house with eggs?

LY: Yeah, carrying them all in baskets. I can't believe we did that, and we were just—oh we did that for years.

HY: How old were you when you started doing that?

LY: Gee, I was, I think from around fourth grade, yeah, and my brother was (in the) sixth grade. We did it until, oh, he went to. . . . He was going to start high school, and we walk all the way from Wai`alae as far as to about Ninth Avenue. Can you believe?

And, so Tuesday we would start peddling after Japanese[-*language*] school [*Wai`alae Japanese-language School*]. So when we were coming home it's dark. Yeah, it's night. Saturdays not too bad because we only go to [*Japanese*]-language school, and so as soon as language school is finished—we start maybe early afternoon—so by dark we're home. But I used to hate Tuesdays because we're in Japanese school until five o'clock, then we start going out. Oh boy, I used to hate it. (By the) time (we) come home you know, sometimes it's after eight. We walk over, we walk back. That's quite a walk. Hilly, too, (laughs). Yeah.

HY: Who would buy the eggs? I mean, who was living all in that area?

LY: Well, as I recall, there were a lot of Chinese and Portuguese in Kaimuki. Today, I guess, it's all mixed, but those days there (were) certain district(s) where you have more (of) certain ethnic group, and Kaimuki was mostly Chinese and Portuguese, few Japanese, but you rarely found any different race.

HY: How is it that your parents obtained that large a property there?

LY: Well, it was farming country then, so we had all kinds of farmers. And these were (under) Bishop Estate, all lease land to farmers. So we had the poultry farmers, dairy, we had hog farmers, and produce farmers. Florists had their own nurseries. And these were the kind of farming that went on in the whole Wai`alae district.

HY: What was the ethnic . . .

LY: Mostly Japanese.

HY: Mostly Japanese farmers?

LY: Mostly Japanese, yeah. The dairies, we had a few Japanese dairymen, but Portuguese were known for dairy work, too. Immediately across us was a big dairy, [*Manuel*] Costa['s] dairy. And they raised cows and they sold their—pasteurized their milk and then marketed the milk. We used to make our own butter because my oldest brother worked at the dairy, feeding the cows early in the morning, milking them. So we got all the milk, and it was our project—we make our own butter.

And then my brother---because he had to quit school to help support the family, big family. So later on he went to Foremost Dairy [*Foremost Dairies-Hawai`i*] and it was called Moanalua Dairy [*Ltd.*] at that time, and he worked there until he died. Over---almost fifty years he worked for Foremost, and when he died he was from. . . . The milk deliveryman he became—oh, he went through all different levels, and he was a supervisor when he died. And by then they were making their delicious ice cream, and all the things that they marketed were quite different from the time he was a boy.

HY: Would you say that most of the kids had to work?

LY: (Oh yes!) He worked in the dairy. My second brother (loved) anything to do with radio, electronics, and back then—this was in the [19]30s now—he wrote to International Correspondence School[s] and he took up radio mechanic, and he was hired by a Kaimuki radio shop, which I can't remember the name, but was Portuguese owners.

And he'd come home, he'd experiment with all the kind of stuff. Sometimes, the whole house would sound like an explosion because he's touching electricity. And I remember he'd be playing with the Morse code (imitates Morse code sound) in the room.

And we were the first ones in our area to have a radio. That RCA [*Radio Club of America*] radio—you know the dog with the horn? The phonograph? And people would all come over to look and listen, fascinated you know, what electronics can do. And in Hawai`i, especially in the country like Wai`alae—back then it was real country—hardly anyone had washing machine. But unfortunately, he had to have surgery for his sinus, and within two weeks he was dead, got infected. But he used to tell my mother, “As soon as I get well,

I'm going to buy you a washing machine, so you don't have to wash clothes by hand." And it was years after that we got one. He quit school, (and) he went into professional training to learn this trade, and he was a good one but he only had a short life.

See, your father [*Lorraine Yamada's brother-in-law*] lost a brother, who was nineteen in 1937, and that was the same year I lost my brother at the age of nineteen. They were both nineteen. Strange yeah?

HY: Interesting.

LY: Yeah, so your uncle died in March, and I lost my brother in July, yeah. Oh boy.

HY: Appendicitis, yeah?

LY: Yeah.

HY: Yeah, that's what I heard.

LY: And it wasn't even ruptured. They just introduced the spinal, what do you call it (sighs), anesthetic, and the doctor did that to—what was his name, Iwao [*Yamada*], Uncle Iwao [*Holly Yamada's uncle, Lorraine Yamada's brother-in-law*], and (the doctor) didn't even have the antidote—overdose. By then it touched his heart, and by the time he called his doctor friend to come over and help him, it was too late. So they did an autopsy afterwards, and nothing had ruptured.

HY: I never knew that. I thought . . .

LY: So the doctor felt so bad, and I don't blame him. The parents were all upset of course. But they forgave the doctor. And the doctor quit his practice for a while, and went on a trip. He couldn't handle.

HY: Who was the doctor?

LY: [Zenko] Matayoshi. And he came back, and he took care of both your grandparents until they died. I mean, anytime something went wrong, he was right there to take care of them. See, after the forgiving and everything, *Obaban* [*Lorraine Yamada's mother-in-law, Holly Yamada's grandmother*] was in the hospital at one time because she was a diabetic, and she almost lost her (gangrenous) foot, but the doctor saved it. And that's when you know, because it was a private hospital, and they would talk for hours, and—because your grandpa told me—the doctor said he felt so bad, but he could not replace (Uncle Iwao's) life, yeah. But for them forgiving him, and then giving him another chance to make up, he said he's so grateful, and he can never thank them enough. He passed away. And his son became a doctor, too. He just retired—the son. Yeah, so it's like that.

And my third brother, he quit school, too. See when, I think you know, when

you have a large family, and you can't provide, the only thing that goes through a child's mind is, "I got to grow up fast, go (to) work. I don't like this kind of life." So he became a mechanic. He was somewhat like my brother that died. He continued where the other one left off, but he went more into auto [*mechanics*].

HY: Did any of your siblings work in the barbershop?

LY: Um um.

HY: No.

LY: I wanted to be a beautician, but my father said no.

HY: So you never worked in the barbershop?

LY: No, never.

HY: Who were his customers?

LY: Oh, the people around Wai`alae.

HY: The neighborhood?

LY: Yeah.

HY: Yeah. Japanese?

LY: Because the community---yeah was big! I mean, anybody if you tell them in the [19]30s, [19]40s, Wai`alae was predominately all Japanese. That's how we had a very large Japanese school from kindergarten until high school. And that's kind of unusual to find in a Japanese school.

HY: What was the name of the school that you went to?

LY: Wai`alae Japanese-[*language*] School.

HY: That was the after school?

LY: The present Star of the Sea School was Wai`alae Japanese School. And the student body was big, too. So, as far as culture, I'm thankful that I went to that school. I learned a lot of things that, I notice, a lot of my friends that went to Japanese[-*language*] school never had the chance.

We learned---you know, tea? Japanese culture, they show you how you pour tea and how you stir. And it's for the birds. I can't. . . . I don't have that kind of patience, but there's a meaning to all that. You stir certain way so many times, you go back so many times, you bow, and who wants to drink tea by then? (Laughs)

But anyway, you learn that, you learn Japanese sewing which is all done by hand. How you sew a little---it starts with a baby's underwear, you know, the slip sort of, for the kimono. Then you learn the baby's kimono. You learn the baby's jacket which is called *chanchanko*—to wear with the kimono, you know, sleeveless. And then, then you learn *hitotsumi*, which is kimono for the young-age girls and boys. Then you learn for the teenage-size kimono, and then the adult. Then you learn to make the *haori*, they call *haori*—it's a coat for women that wear kimono. Then you learn how to make *obi*—*obi* is the sash for the kimono. You learn flower arrangement. So all those things I learned when I went to Japanese school, you know, and I consider myself very fortunate. Because all these things came in handy.

HY: What language did you speak at home? Did you speak Japanese?

LY: Japanese. My parents spoke Okinawan and Japanese. I didn't know a word of English when I went to first grade. Nothing. Yeah, so three languages, basically, was spoken at home.

HY: And when you started school, was that a common experience for kids to not speak English?

LY: No, not when I went. I think I was the only one. I don't know how come. I just couldn't understand why---and those days I think parents are so busy (laughing) raising their children and working hard. It's not like today. I know I prepared my children, "You going to start school, and you're going to learn this and. . . ." And they get all excited. But nobody told me, "You going to school." And they going to leave me in this strange building, where they strip you the first day you go there, to get your inoculation and vaccination, your physical. It's done in this huge room with all these first graders because it's farming country, and it's considered probably, indigent. These are all farmers (family members). They don't go to the doctors or anything. So when they come, there's a doctor that's assigned to the school. Examine all the kids, and you get your vaccination then, and your injection for the other communicable disease like chicken pox, and mumps, and that kind of stuff.

So now, I getting all poked with this needle, and my father left me. And I ran out of the building, and I remember he had a Model T. He's going home, and I started chasing that car. (Laughs) And then when it slowly disappeared, I walked back. And I don't know what they're saying, you know because I don't understand the language. Then, I tell you, I go in this room, and the classes were big.

HY: How many students?

LY: We had about fifty. Fifty you know, and not only. . . . This is first grade, and you have four classes of first graders, and they('re) all large classes. So if you think you have four of fifty, that's 200 kids, only one grade level. So I'm in there, and this one was from kindergarten until sixth grade, elementary

school—Wai`alae elementary school [*Wai`alae School*].

So we go there. I had a big, fat Hawaiian teacher, I don't know what she's saying, and that's all I know. She'd start pounding the desk, and she('ll say), "Stick candy." (To myself), "Oh she's going to give candy." I raised my hand you know, and the boy next to me which was not my immediate neighbor, but I know the parents used to visit my house. He said, "Don't raise your hand! 'Stick candy' means a spanking, the paddle." Look like, shaped like a stick candy (sucker).

And I go, "Ohhh!" (Laughs) But I think the teacher knew. Yeah, so.

HY: Is she the one that gave you your English name? [*Loraine's Japanese name is Tsutae.*]

LY: No. My English name I didn't get until I was in the sixth grade. This one was Miss Williams, and my sixth-grade teacher was Mrs. [*Mabe*] Mahikoa.

HY: And were these all Japanese kids? Pretty much, your school?

LY: Yeah. Those days, wherever you went, in my area anyway, majority of them were Japanese. Few Hawaiians, few Portuguese. Maybe one Puerto Rican. Hardly any *Haoles*. Yeah was like that.

HY: What do you remember about playtime? Did you play with the neighborhood kids? Or . . .

LY: Once in a while. Our days, everybody work from the time you're little. I have to watch kids, you know.

HY: Your younger . . .

LY: I have the twins [twin sisters], yeah, the twins. And I also worked the farm. At least the simple tasks like collecting the eggs. You going to make many trips because you can't carry too many eggs at one time, but that's your job. Wash the troughs for the water, because all the water, you know—when we('re) in school it's not too bad, my mother has to do it. But weekends and summer, two o'clock all the troughs have to be filled with water, in order for the chicken(s) to survive, and we have to collect the eggs, and the chickens have to be fed twice a day.

Oh, it was---I used to hate it. Then, that's not all. After you've picked the eggs, you have to clean them. Make sure there's no doo-doo on it. Clean it all, then you have to check and see that they're not fertile, then you have to pack them in the boxes (sighs), ready for market. Unending. You can never go anyplace on a vacation because you're dealing with livestock. And then if you did go it was only for church function, but you must be home. Somebody has to be home by two o'clock to take care of the chickens. Yeah, so.

HY: Was your---you said there was a room in your house with a . . .

LY: Shrine, yeah.

HY: Shrine, Buddhist shrine. Was your family active in . . .

LY: Mm hmm [yes]. We went to church every Sunday—Buddhist church yeah. There was one in Wai`alae, and then . . .

HY: What was the name of the church?

LY: Wai`alae Hongwanji, and then the main one [*Hongwanji Mission*] is in Fort Street. On special occasions like New Year's or something, we would go to the main temple, but Sundays. . . . The only time you can be excused is when you're seriously sick. If it's only a minor cold or no fever, you go. (Laughs) Oh I tell you.

HY: So you didn't have time to play that much?

LY: Hardly, hardly. Yeah.

HY: What about with your brothers and sisters?

LY: Even then. We all---it's in between that we might play or. . . . And this was common with every home. So sometimes when everything is done which is about 5:00, 5:30, maybe the neighborhood, my immediate neighbors—and they were all boys—we would play. I have to participate in all-boy games because I was the only girl, you know, kind of same age level.

And you're not allowed to go to a distant, what you call, home to play with your friends. You got to be readily available at one call if you're needed so you just can't go. That's farm life.

HY: So how was your adjustment to school then, after the initial shock?

LY: Good, was good.

HY: You got to like it?

LY: Yeah. Once I learned the language. See, that's why I was in the D class in first grade, because all those that don't speak Japanese—I mean English—or first time in that school, they would kind of put you in the D class to observe, and then they shift you from the second grade.

But from the second grade I went to A class, right through. Only the first grade. And then we had English[*-language*] school until two o'clock. And then those days, we did monitor work at school, too, yeah like cleaning the rooms and clapping the erasers. All the students did those things. So they allow that one hour space to start [*Japanese-*]language school because predominantly

all the children went to language school. So three o'clock, Japanese[-*language*] school start.

HY: Would it be in the same facility, the same building?

LY: No, no, different.

HY: Oh, so where would you go for that then?

LY: Okay, I go to Wai`alae School which is on Twentieth [*Nineteenth*] Avenue, I think. Twentieth and Harding [*Avenue*]. From there, Star of the Sea School [*originally Wai`alae Japanese-language School*].

HY: Oh, I see, I see.

LY: You walk, and we go to Japanese[-*language*] school, and when it is finished, then you walk home which is further towards—going towards `Aina Haina. Yeah, that's where we would be living, `Aki`aki Place. And so the older children would start Japanese school at four o'clock. So by the time they come home, it's after five. Always the class is for an hour.

And of course, most of the kids hated Japanese school—especially the boys—so they play hooky (laughs). But these are all considered private schools, so you pay tuition. But when you're kids, I guess, like I know my brother played hooky a lot. They don't realize the hard-earned money the parents spend to send you for an education, yeah. But I loved Japanese school so I used to look forward to going. Most of them didn't like it.

HY: What did your father do then after he quit the barbershop, then he contracted [*was a construction contractor*] . . .

LY: Oh, he went into contracting, yeah. And he did that for quite a while until he was in his early sixties. Then he fell off the roof and broke his leg. And since then, he never went back to contracting and he helped my mother with the farming.

And when Bishop Estate decided to sell all these lands fee simple and they made it into a residential district—subdivided and everything—all the farmers there had to move out.

So, my oldest brother asked them to come and live with them in Kalihi. They had built a new home, but they said no. As long as they're healthy, they want to work on a farm. So they went to Koko Head and they lived there, I think, '55, '65, I think around almost fifteen years. They went into produce farming, and that was hard work.

I wasn't there, I was already married and living on the Big Island, but whenever I visited them I thought, "Wow." And I told them, "Why do you want to work so hard?"

They said, "Oh we're so lucky, you know, we're healthy. If we quit working we're going to die."

So they stayed there until they felt they no longer. . . . All these different illnesses start coming out with old age, so they went and they lived with my brother until they both passed away. Yeah.

HY: Where did you go to high school?

LY: Kaimuki. At that time, Kaimuki Intermediate [*School*] and Kaimuki High School were combined. Half a day was for intermediate, high school was for afternoon. And at Kaimuki High School—the present one—was never there and I think the first graduating class was in 1932, '42, '50. I think 1949, '50, around there. My twin sister(s), they [the twins] were the first graduating class of Kaimuki High School, the new one [*on Kaimuki Avenue*]. Till then, you know . . .

HY: Where was the---so was the old one located in the same place?

LY: No it was toward Fort Ruger—Diamond Head side. You know where Diamond Head [Memorial] Cemetery? As you going there, you going to pass that school—Kaimuki Intermediate School.

HY: Oh I see, and the high school was located in that building [as well].

LY: Yeah, and I think because [*there were*] more and more children from `Aina Haina—people started building homes [*out*] that way because it was not heavily populated at that time—and as far as Koko Head, all the children went to the same school, Wai`alae School. And from there to Lili`uokalani [*Intermediate*] School. I don't know if you know, right on Wai`alae Avenue across Kaimuki Theatre, that was the [*Lili`uokalani*] Intermediate School. And then, Kaimuki High School. It became so large that only the seventh graders were at Lili`uokalani [*Intermediate*] School. Eighth and ninth graders were at Kaimuki Intermediate morning time only because that's how large the student body became. And then from one o'clock until five was high school.

HY: Was split shifts.

LY: Mm hmm, because till then, McKinley High School was the biggest student body. All schools up to Koko Head went to McKinley [*High School*], so you can imagine how. . . . McKinley and then came Farrington [*High School*—those two schools were the biggest. And then came Hilo High School. Can you imagine . . .

HY: Then came Hilo?

LY: Yeah, Hilo High School('s)---big student body.

HY: I think we're running out of tape here.

HY: This is a continuation of the interview with Loraine Yamada.

When you were in high school you. . . . Was that when you started working at Spud's Laundry?

LY: No, before, before.

HY: Oh, before then, when you were in intermediate school?

LY: Yeah, intermediate school.

HY: How did you get that job?

LY: Oh, I took my brother's social security card because I was underage. I was only---child labor was [*allowed only*] from [*age*] sixteen, and I must have been about thirteen or fourteen. I took his card. They don't know the difference because that's a *Haole* firm—Spud's Laundry. And so my name would—even though it's Loraine, you know when I went through elementary school it was always through my Japanese name [*Tsutae*], and my brother also was Motoyasu, and I figure they don't know the difference, they never did. They took his number and hired me. (Laughs) So I worked at Spud's Laundry.

HY: Where was that located?

LY: Right on King Street. I'm trying to think. It was almost towards the Honolulu Rapid Transit [*Company*], what you call, barnyard. So I would say Kaka`ako, around Kaka`ako, yeah.

And then I worked for various doctors' homes baby-sitting when I was even younger. And most of the doctors are wealthy families. Usually had their own housekeeper, cooks, and nursemaid. So I would---they call the baby-sitter nursemaid those days and I would be the baby-sitter.

HY: What was the ethnicity of the families that you sat for?

LY: Mostly Caucasian, yeah, yeah.

HY: Caucasian. And when you worked at Spud's, what kind of. . . . Can you describe the duties that you did?

LY: I was a checker first. All the bags of laundry that came in, and it seemed like most of it was from the navy, so . . .

HY: What year was this about?

LY: Oh, this was about 1940 or '41 around there I think . . .

HY: Right before the war?

LY: Yeah. And what you have to do, the laundry comes in bags. You empty the bag and you have to sort it out, the dark from the light, and then if it's extremely dirty, then I guess you got to put [*it*] in another pile, or make sure that everything is marked. If it's not, you have to mark it, the same number, so they know that after it's done it goes to the same package or whatever. Anyway, I was a checker, and that was a filthy job because you know . . .

HY: All the laundry still dirty, yeah?

LY: Mm, smelly. And then I became a presser. The big iron, you know the one that you push down right and you go (makes a spraying sound) with the steam come out (laughs). I do the pants. Sailor's pants are easy. They're bell bottoms, but you know, no crease. So it's easy. I did that. Press flat things like handkerchief. That's the kind of job I did. And this was only mainly for summer between school.

HY: Do you remember the names of the owners?

LY: No, I don't but it was Spud's Laundry.

HY: What was your wage, do you remember?

LY: Must have been so cheap—maybe twenty-five, thirty cents an hour—yeah, that's all.

HY: And why did you want to get a job when you were that young?

LY: Oh, like I told you earlier, I think most of us that came from big families that lived on a farm, just wanted to get out of this kind of living. And not everybody felt that way, but I felt, I don't care if I was a girl, I wanted to work, earn my own money, be independent and get out. That's how I used to think, and I don't care if I never see farm life again.

But you know, after I got married, I missed it. I love that country life, and I wanted my children to grow up—so I think was good I lived in Hilo because it was country. And nothing like farm life to bring up children. You learn so much about food, sharing, learning about nature, appreciating all this freedom. In a sense what I'm talking about is not living in a concrete jungle with paved roads. Country life—something about it. It's so good, and it's a . . . You know most all the people that lived on the farm shed lot of tears, sweat, and blood, but there's a closeness I think because we all have this something in common that we understand each other. And no matter where I go, even when I went to the Big Island.

Hilo is now mushrooming into a city and it's still way behind compared to

Honolulu. But when we perform in the rural areas, whenever we're singing, and usually I am emceeing the program, I always say, "There's nothing like country folks. There's something about you people that will always be special to me." And you can tell. They're different. They're warmer, and they're more caring and they're more sharing, too. And that quality, you know, you rarely find it in the city.

I'm most thankful now. And I always tell my children because they don't know what farm life is, and that is why I think, you know, I wanted to work (at an) early age because I see the struggles on the farm and how you're tied up to this one place. This like your trap, there's no freedom. And I wanted to just get out, but anytime you want to get out, you have to have money, you have to give up something. So, that's how it was. (Laughs)

HY: So you took your brother's social security card.

LY: Yeah, right. And then as I grew older, I would work longer hours, different jobs. In fact I quit my. . . . I quit school, too, for a while and I just. . . . I thought I got to do something with my life.

HY: How old were you, then when you quit?

LY: I was about seventeen, sixteen, seventeen.

HY: Oh, this was when the war interrupted?

LY: Yeah, and then I finished up later, but then luckily you know, the music school accepted me and I finished that before I even went back to go get my high school diploma. I had to take the test in order to get that.

HY: What was the name of the music school?

LY: It was called Hawai'i Institute of Technology and that was in Kalihi on Kam[*ehameha*] IV Road where they taught mostly electronic things to the boys. For some reason the girls hardly took interest in that kind of stuff. And then on the separate building we had drama, radio, piano, vocal, and English, and radio speech—that's what we had.

HY: Just to go back a little bit, when did you develop an interest in music?

LY: Oh, ever since I was in elementary school. I was singing from the time I was about nine or ten.

HY: And did you perform?

LY: Mm hmm, in school mainly. And from the time I was about twelve, I used to perform in the theaters for parties.

HY: What theaters? Do you remember names?

LY: Yeah, Japanese theaters. There was a Park Theatre, an International Theatre.

HY: Is that the one [*International Theatre*] on College Walk?

LY: Mm hmm. And then we used to entertain at the various Royal Amusement[*s Ltd.*] theaters which was—Sheridan [*Theatre*] was one of the theaters that ran Japanese movies, so all related to Japanese culture, yeah. And then . . .

HY: And this was when you were still a teen?

LY: Mm hmm, mm hmm, in my teens.

HY: When were you performing? In your teens, okay.

LY: Yeah, up until---oh when the war came it stopped. And we continued, wait, the war ended in '45. . . . I went back to singing about 1946. And that was---early part of '46 hardly anything, but towards mid '46, all the Japanese culture was beginning to come back because all this came to a halt, but started to come back, and then International Theatre opened again for Japanese things. So we started practicing and we performed. Sometimes we used to perform at the different auditoriums, like lot of the Japanese shows were held at McKinley High School Auditorium and Kawanakoa School[*'s*] auditorium. Where else. . . .

HY: Can you describe what some of these theaters were like?

LY: International Theatre was beautiful, I thought. The seats were plush because it was one of the newer theaters. Stage was big, and I used to get all excited because that was the only theater I knew—right in the middle you know—they would press a button and the mike would come out of the floor. For us I thought that was . . .

HY: Glamour.

LY: Yeah. (Laughs) The other ones, you know, you going carry out the mike, but International Theatre the mike would come out of the floor and I thought, oh, that was something. And, of course, we used to go to the outside islands to perform, too.

HY: Who would come to these performances?

LY: Oh, those days the Japanese community was so into it, and lot of the older people were still living, you know, like your grandparents' age. See if they were living now, they would be over 100.

By that time---they are the group of people I think mostly that missed their ethnic music. So naturally when we sing---after the war, there were lines waiting to get in to see us perform, oh, which gave us a thrill too. So we had

the Japanese classical dancers, and . . .

HY: Did you dance as well?

LY: No, my thing was mainly singing. And, well as a child you know, I used to do acting too—stage acting, yeah.

HY: And did you perform in the same theaters—drama?

LY: No, it was totally different again, yeah. In school I did, and that's how the strangest thing you know, I don't know whether I mentioned, but when we went to perform on the Mainland—and this is all Japanese now, Japanese entertainment—the people that were relocated in camps were just coming back to California, and we were the first group of Japanese ethnic entertainers to go into California. Oh they were so appreciative, I mean most of them were crying when we (were) singing.

And we also sang about the boys, 442nd [*Regimental Combat Team*] and 100[*th Infantry Battalion*]*—the niseis. They had composed a song. Everywhere I went for—'45, '46, till the fifties—they would ask me to sing that song, and I would sing it. And it's a patriotic song, see.*

One verse you sing 442nd [*Regimental Combat Team*] infantry, the second one you sing, “One *puka puka*,” which is 100, 100 Infantry [*Battalion*]*—and these were boys from Hawai`i. So that, too, you know. And that's where my Japanese school [Wai`alae Japanese-language School] principal was also taken away to the camp.*

HY: What was his name?

LY: Miyagi, Miyagi, I forget his first name. Anyway, Mr. [*Gene*] Miyagi was the principal and his wife taught first grade. And we were at the Miyako Hotel in Los Angeles. Somebody said, “Oh, you know, Ishikawa [*Lorraine Yamada's family name*]-*san* you have a visitor.” So I go down to the lobby, and it was the principal and his wife because they saw (in) the paper that we're coming from Hawai`i and (saw) my name and I was singing from elementary school so they came (to see me). And they---oh the *okusan*—we call *okusan*, you know the principal's wife—she held me and she cried and cried.

And last year I didn't know, or early this year, she came (to Hawai`i). She's in her nineties.

But when my sister told me about it—had I known, I would have flown over because she wanted to meet all, as many people as she can from Wai`alae because that was their home, that was where they taught until they were taken away. And in this Japanese paper they said it had all the history of what she did. And there was a place where they designated for her to meet with these Wai`alae people.

And I said, “Why didn't you tell me sooner?” She said they didn't realize they

were reading the paper and it was all already over. So she went home to L.A. [*Los Angeles*] I never saw her.

But she knew, too, she's in her nineties, she won't have too much longer to live and I guess. . . . Oh, if I had known, I would have come to see her. And. . . .

HY: Did you have a group name in the early days?

LY: Yeah, the first group I went with was Hawai'i Takarazuka [*Music*] Club, that's what it was called. Until I got married I was with that group.

HY: How big a group was that?

LY: Not very big. But if you count all the dancers and the singers, I would say, gee about, only about fifteen. And then, while I was with them, I was also with Shinko Orchestra, and the leader of Shinko Orchestra is Harry Urata. He still teaches music—mostly *karaoke* singing. And he was one of the Japanese[-*language*] school instructors where I went to school. He came as a young man educated in Japan and he taught at Wai'ala'e Japanese[-*language*] School, and he was the leader of Shinko Orchestra.

So, I sang with them. And there was one called Nippon Orchestra. I sang with them for a little while.

HY: And were these all in Japanese, Japanese-style singing?

LY: Yeah, yeah.

HY: And you mentioned before that they didn't call it *enka* style . . .

LY: Yeah, they called it---it's the same kind of music but they called it *ryukoka* which means pop song—the presently popular songs—so it's pop songs. Today, they don't call it *ryukoka*, they call it *enka*, for some reason. I don't know what the origin is that they changed it to *enka*. But just recently on one of the Japanese shows, I heard them talking—I got the tail end of it. And they said, “Yes, but why do they call it *enka* now and back then we used to call it *ryukouta* or *ryukoka*?”

You know? *Ryukoka* means. . . . R-Y-U. Ryu-ko-ka. Today they call it *enka*. So. It means the same thing—pop songs.

HY: And where would the orchestras play? Would it be in these theaters as well?

LY: I was lucky that I was affiliated with the Matsuo Brothers [*Tatsuro, Fred*] that ran International Theatre because the opportunity that I had in traveling, everything was through the Matsuo Brothers [*later became Fred Matsuo Productions*]. They were all theater people from the issei—the fathers' time,

you know. But the only sad thing is they all died young. And there's only one brother left. The only one that was not affiliated with the theater. He's the one that runs the saimin place—Shiro Matsuo [owner of Shiro's Hula Hula Drive In and Saimin Haven, *Shiro's in Waipahu*, *Shiro's Personalized Catering*, and *Shiro's Saimin Haven*]. Yeah, and so I've known Shiro since I was in my *hanabata* age. (HY laughs.) Yeah, and his brother—the one right above him—was the most charmer in the show business, but he took time off to serve in the 100th Infantry [*Battalion*]. So when he came back, we resumed our performance. But the funny thing is when the war started, everything came to a halt then we started again in '46. He just come back in early, maybe latter part of '45, and the first big show we had—you see weekly we would perform for the returnees coming back from the war, seemed like every weekend we had some kind of welcome-home party for some soldier that's coming home. But our biggest project was to raise money for the Hilo people that had lost their homes in the tidal wave of 1946. So we went there to perform and this was Hawai'i Takarazuka. And Hilo had formed their own Takarazuka Club under the sponsorship of Matsuo Brothers.

So when we performed, we would merge yeah, and that's how I met Uncle Masao [*Lorraine Yamada's husband, Masao Yamada*]. He was in that group. Yeah, so the lucky part for me was---we didn't have the best orchestra, it was usually accompanied by piano and maybe a guitar and mandolin. But the orchestras that I love was not at the theater—the Shinko Orchestra and Nippon Orchestra was mainly for parties or get-together.

HY: Did they perform at clubs, too?

LY: Not this one. They had later on but I was married already.

HY: So it happened after.

LY: Yeah. Mine was just after the war and these people—Shinko Orchestra, the leader [*Harry Urata*] still does translation of songs for the third and fourth generation. He still does it. I see it in the paper. But the leader [*Akira Takei*] of Nippon Orchestra didn't live that long. After I got married, he passed away too. He was a music major in Japan. He used to deliver soda water—soda pop—and he was. . . . Whenever there was a singing contest or something, he was asked to be the judge. That's how I met him. And he remembered me from singing as a child, and when I'm working part-time in the lunch stand, he's delivering the soda and he recognized me, and he would always say, “You know I gave you number one, you know, first, but unfortunately you came in second.” He always talked about it, and then he asked me to sing for his orchestra. So I sang for a short while—oh, on a special performance.

HY: So this was when you were high school age?

LY: Yeah, yeah.

HY: Were you one of the younger members?

LY: Younger, yeah. I was . . .

HY: What age were more most of these people?

LY: Oh, they were I think early twenties, mid-twenties. Yeah.

HY: And after you worked at Spud's Laundry, that was just a summer job.

LY: Oh yeah.

HY: Okay, and you continued to baby-sit?

LY: No. As soon as I made sixteen now, I can work on my own so I got my own social security card. (Laughs) Yeah, and then I told myself I'm going to wait on tables because I get food to eat, and I have tips so I'll have money every day. So I went to work at Kau-Kau Korner that was world famous—right there in the crossroads, Waikiki—Kapi`olani and Kalakaua. Now it's Coco's I think. Oh I don't know, maybe something else.

HY: No, Coco's isn't there anymore.

LY: Oh, what is it called?

HY: Is that where Hard Rock [*Cafe*] is now?

LY: I don't know. It's kind of like . . .

HY: Yeah, Coco's used to be there, and then now I think it's Hard Rock.

LY: Oh, okay. Anyway, the beginning was Kau-Kau Korner. And that was the only restaurant that was opened twenty-four hours a day even during the war, but everything is blacked out. And I worked as a carhop. So when the cars come in, I wait on the cars and I would work. Summertime I would work full-time, school days I would work just nighttime, short hours. Because by---I forget how it was now . . .

HY: The war started by that time, yeah?

LY: Oh yeah, the war had started. And when you come in, you have something like these vinyl awnings hanging over the door because no lights must show—the enemy can spot the light.

So you have to go in, and most of the customers were defense workers at Pearl Harbor—the night shift—and they had twenty-four hours work, also. They had, now let me see, the regular shift, the swing shift, the graveyard shift—so twenty-four hours a day you have all these customers coming in. And when they lifted the blackout, wasn't too bad. But . . .

HY: But it stayed open throughout, twenty-four hours?

LY: Yeah, that was the only place—Kau-Kau Korner. Then I went to work, oh, off and on you know. There was a place called Chicken Korner.

HY: Where was that?

LY: Chicken Korner was on Kalakaua Avenue right across Kuhio Beach. And that was run by a man called Howdy Reynolds. He was a clown and he had his own show. And he had this well-known restaurant. I used to work there part-time, while I went to school. Then, oh boy I tell you. Oh and then during the summer, I worked at Waikiki [*War Memorial*] Natatorium which is next to the [*Waikiki*] Aquarium. Very successful lunch stand. I worked there summertime(s) and . . .

HY: What years was that?

LY: Gee that was 1943, I think.

HY: Who were the customers for that place?

LY: Oh, lot of locals plus military. Because the military, if I'm not mistaken, if I can remember correctly, it was right across the natatorium, it's Kapi`olani Park. Near the zoo. Over there was all military camp, all with pup tents and the soldiers were stationed there, and we were right across. And we had the Olympic-size swimming pool [*Waikiki War Memorial Natatorium*], so the local kids are all involved and the aquarium. So we had from all, what you call, all kinds of business—lot of locals—that was their famous, favorite picnic and swimming spot. But things change. . . . Today, I don't think . . . I don't know if anybody goes there.

HY: No, they're still trying to figure out what to do with the natatorium, whether they're going to renovate or whether they're going to get rid of it. It's just sitting there.

LY: Yeah because all the famous swimmers were over there, and so I knew all the lifeguards because that's where they used to come and eat, at that lunch stand. And right past our lunch stand, you just walk and was that, what did they call that place? There was another big area where they. . . . Oh, they had the shower stalls and the bathrooms and, oh, there was a family living right there in the premises to take care of all this. And that was for the public, so maybe it was under [*City and*] County Parks and Recreation. Yeah, that's what it was.

HY: Were you living at home in Wai`alae still?

LY: (Yes), I was.

HY: And then at that time you had stopped—you weren't going to school, is

that right?

LY: No, I was.

HY: Oh you were.

LY: Yeah I was. I worked at that lunch stand during summer from eight [A.M.] to five [P.M.], six o'clock. Long hours, but I had a very nice boss. And them two, he was a college grad[uate]—Japanese man, Japanese couple, young couple—and he too, I think, was so ambitious. He left. He moved to Chicago, and I heard they're doing real well. And that was, gee, way back. I think they moved in 1950 or a little earlier. I got married in '47.

HY: Why is it that you stopped going to high school? What happened?

LY: Well, when the war came and we had to switch to Kaimuki [*High School*]. Already, for a while we didn't have school, and then I liked it. I'd rather work and earn money. So, I said, "I not going to school." Oh, my father was all upset. But I said, "No, I can always go back. I'm not going school." So I stopped for a while and then I went to school, but, see, I didn't go back to high school already, because when you miss one year, I'm not going to go back and fall back one year, you know.

So then I tried entering directly into that music school [*Hawaii Institute of Technology*], and I got in and I got a scholarship. So, I stayed there until just before I get married. When I finished that school, I was going to start music school in Los Angeles.

But that's when I met uncle [*Lorraine Yamada's husband, Holly Yamada's uncle*], see, on the way to perform and, boy, I tell you. We went together only two weeks, and two months later we got married. September, October. . . . Yeah. Can you believe? And we were married what, forty-five years. Crazy yeah? (Laughs)

But we had our share of misery, too, (laughs) but that's life. So I quit anyway, and then I went back and then. . . . In fact, when I went to Hilo as his wife, I don't know how many children I had [*at that time*]. I said I better get my diploma. So I took the test and I took a refresher course in English, and then I tried for the test, and luckily, I passed so I got my diploma.

HY: That was in '47?

LY: No, no. [*Nineteen*] forty-seven, November, I got married. This is after I got married, I don't know if I had all the children. Probably was . . .

HY: Oh, much later?

LY: Yeah, much later. And then I used to take lot of evening courses, and I

used to tell Uncle, "You should go too," because he was forced to quit. I was encouraged to go but I quit on my own.

See, Uncle didn't want me to work, but when the last child started school, I said, "No, I have to go to work. The kids need an education and you not making that much at the [*Yamada Furniture*] Store." But Hilo is so limited. You know what I mean? And if you don't go to school and get a good education, you're that much. . . . The only thing that I had going for me was I could speak Japanese and write Japanese. So in my later life, I went to Kona to work in the hotels where I can work with the Japanese tourists. That again, see . . .

HY: That's Kona Surf [*Resort and Country Club*]?

LY: Mm hmm. Thanks to my Japanese education which is still not enough. Thanks to that, I got a good job. But if I studied further, I could have gotten a better job. But I really enjoyed my job. It was like play. I run the weddings, I hear nice music. All day what I do is talk to these people, teach them little bit of Hawaiiana and they tip you big. (Laughs) I had it made. To me, I had the best job in the whole hotel. (Laughs) That was wonderful. But thanks to the Japanese teachings, I got what I wanted.

HY: I think we're running out of tape again.

HY: Okay, you were talking about [*Manuel*] Costa['s] dairy changing?

LY: Yeah, and I think it was around 1937. Costa['s] farm moved and they went out further country to start a bigger dairy, and Mr. William Hopkins moved in to start his poultry farm, and he had one of the biggest poultry farms in O`ahu. And he was a Caucasian man. And when the war started, immediately all Japanese became suspects, and they sent the military force—the MPs [*military police*—to go to every house and inspect the homes that they. . . . Well, you know, see, when you have fear, you don't trust. And it's awful. We feel we're faithful Americans, but naturally the old folks had brought home, I mean, kept in their homes some things of their ethnic background like the emperor's picture, some homes had the flag, and even the Buddhist religion is, they feel it's related to Japanese culture. And, you know, they didn't want anything Japanese. And, oh the families themselves got so scared that they have relatives pictures on the wall probably with kimono on—kimono reminds of their enemy country, so they would take all that down. Many of them burnt everything that was Japanese, or buried it, or hid it, including the emperor's picture.

But I remember all the military police were coming up the road, and Mr. Hopkins came out and he stopped them. He said, "You don't have to go through all this with the people over here. I've known them. They're not that kind of people, they're just farmers. They're happy where they are and I would be fully responsible." And you know, so they didn't. Which I, ho---and

those days you don't see too many *Haoles*. And even for myself as a child you know, and I see all these soldiers now they're all *Haoles*, and they have guns, rifles, bayonets. And they even came to where I was working, you know that natatorium? With the bayonets they came in because it was Japanese people that were running [the lunch stand where LY was working].

And they're afraid of us maybe even though we look small and harmless, but we're afraid of them, too, (laughs) because they talk so different. You know, we weren't used to listening to southern accents, like, ho, was so different. And, yeah I was so nervous. We didn't do anything wrong, but see, when you're ignorant of anything the fear becomes so magnified, you know, that you shiver. And especially for the first generation because there were few older people that were working where I was working. Oh . . .

HY: At the [*lunch stand by the*] natatorium?

LY: Mm hmm. The lady wanted to cry, she's so scared. But once you get to know people, see they('re) human just like us—they're nice. But when you don't know, hoo, spooky.

But Mr. Hopkins played a big role in protecting us (and) backing us up.

HY: Did they listen to him, then?

LY: Yeah. All above Mr. Hopkins, we had more homes. They didn't come in and inspect. Yeah, they just left. Say, "Oh, thank you." And you know . . .

HY: So Costa['s] Dairy became Hopkins' poultry farm?

LY: Poultry farm, mm hmm.

HY: Did he also own the dairy?

LY: No, that was Costa family—Portuguese family.

HY: Oh, oh, oh, I see.

LY: And Mr. Hopkins was a Caucasian man. I don't know where he came from, but he loved children. Oh, to me he was like Santa Claus. You know, he would say, "Oh, hello Too-tired." Tsutae, he can't say my Japanese name. Call me like I'm too tired. (Laughs) He'd pick me up, lift me up, and then when he delivers all his eggs. . . . Such a big farm that he would deliver daily to Hind-Clarke Dairy—there was a Hind-Clarke Dairy—he'd take all his eggs there and he says, "Come children, I'm taking you for a ride." He would take about three of us, and he'll deliver his eggs. Hind-Clarke Dairy had a little fountain there where they sell ice cream—homemade ice cream—and they were known for this. Delicious ice cream. He would buy us a cone, give all of us the ice cream. It was a treat for us. Then he's always, you know, big man

with the big belly and always laughing and lifting us up, buy us the ice cream, take us home. "Here's a nickel for you, here's a nickel." He would give us a nickel each. (Laughs) Oh, he was such a nice man—jolly. Yeah, Hopkins' poultry farm.

HY: What do you remember about the day, December 7? Where were you?

LY: Oh, I was at the theater.

HY: Which theater?

LY: International (laughs). See, that's how devoted I was to my music. Every Sunday we would rehearse at the theater. And we were there. Before eight [A.M.], I'm there. And then I remember this Hawaiian fellow that worked at the theater, and he was also a performer with us—Sam[ue] Kapule. "What you kids doing over here?" You know, scolded.

And I said, "Why?"

He said, "There's no rehearsal today!"

"Why?" I said.

"Don't you know there's a war going on? And it's the Japanese that came, you know!"

And while he's talking to me outside, I could see puffs of smoke way up high, and every now and then you can see a tiny plane way up—shining, because the sun was out. And you can see the, what do you call it, these zero planes [*Japanese planes*] way up. And we don't know what is war. "What do you mean war?"

He said, "Go home! Go home! No more practice today! No more movies, no more nothing!"

So we said, "Wow, the terrible!"

And there's this girl that lived right on the lower street here—Kalo Lane [*Place*]. There was a Kalo Lane right across Varsity Theatre. She lived there and so. . . . Okay, we hopped on the---and there was another girl from McCully. So we got on the bus, and we said, "Okay, we go home." Those days we had trollies running. So when we reached. . . . Mary was the closest. Mary lived in McCully. So she said, "Come to my house." So like fools, the three of us went down, and we went to her house and then, as soon as we reached her house, the mother said—oh she seemed like, it was the end of the world, and fear written all over her face.

"Come in! Come in!" she says, "Why are you folks here? You better go home because there's a war on."

"Oh, wow!" we said.

"And you know the terrible part is they say it's Japan, so we're enemies now, you know."

And just as she's talking and explaining, boy there was a big explosion and the house just shook, and everything fell down. And when we look out the window, the whole block was on fire. And actually . . .

HY: What street was it on?

LY: Um, King Street. . . . Wait, Algaroba [*Street*], and uh wait, Algaroba and I don't know what the other street was [*Pumehana Street*]. One block behind King. And, oh I'm. . . . You know that noise was so loud, and the fire outside was so intense. Everybody's with their hose. They want to hose their house so that the fire wouldn't. . . . But there's no water, hardly any water coming out. And there was a service station [*McCully Service Station*] across these people's house, and they were afraid that something's going to explode. Oh, I was so scared.

I said, "Let's go already!" You know, we ran out to King Street and we can still hear the explosion now and then, so we went one street above, above King Street which was Young Street. We start running towards Mo`ili`ili. Betty lived down here and I live Wai`alae. Ho, we're so scared and every time we hear a loud one, we just run under a tree or we crawl underneath and we stay still for a while and then. . . . Because everything came to a halt.

King Street, the fire by that time, you know—some of the stores were burning. In fact that whole block burned down. By the time I ran and I reached. . . . I go past here, I go beyond—you know where you come to Foodland where you have Kapahulu, Harding, and Wai`alae Avenue[s]?—little bit past there. And the bus came. I caught that bus. I went home, and of course my folks were worried.

HY: You ran all the way from McCully to . . .

LY: Yeah. Till up to there.

HY: Oh.

LY: And by then the bus came. So I jumped on the bus and went all the way to Wai`alae, and the bus terminal didn't go as far as my home. From there I have to walk. So I walked and I went home and I. . . . They were all worried, "What---where were you?"

I said, "Oh, you wouldn't believe. Oh! McCully there was. . . . I don't know who started it or what happened, but the whole block was burning."

And then from that night on it's blackout—you know the radio's on, no lights, you are not to go out, no. . . . Do not put on any lights. And then we went through all the process of painting our windows or buying shades. We all had to go to school and get our gas masks. We all carried gas masks during the war, and during the early part of the war . . .

HY: They were issued at school?

LY: Yeah, all for the whole family. Everybody carried a gas mask. And everything came down to rationing—the gasoline, food, certain appliances, needs for babies and things. Everything was sold in priority. You have to submit your name. Like if you were going to buy a refrigerator: “Why do you need this?” Now if you had a baby, well baby's milk has to be kept fresh. (Everything was dealt with priority.)

And then, slow, gradually you know, like. . . . Funny, yeah, even during the war, there's always somebody ingenious yeah (laughs) make blackout lights. You know for the car? Out of all the cars, traffic cannot come to a stop, so they have these blackout lights. You can't see from above, but for the driver, you have a little light where it helps for you to drive at night.

So, I don't know how long it was that we lived on the blackout December 7, I think at least half the year of the following year, 1942. [*Total blackout became a dim-out in July 1942; all blackout regulations were lifted by July 1944.*] And then, everything was on curfew. By eight o'clock, everybody has to be off the street something like that, I remember. You know, and I came---I put on so much weight, because you know, teenagers use a lot of energy. But you only in the house and you can't go out, but you get hungry, you going to eat. Oh that's the heaviest I got, during about three months after the war. And then, of course, I lost it all again. Holy cats! Everything was rationed . . .

HY: How did that affect your parent's farm?

LY: Oh, the feed, you know the chicken feed? That became a problem, too, because most of our feed and certain kind of food for the people were all brought in from the Mainland. And those days, nothing was air freighted into Hawai'i—all by ship. So the Matson [*Navigation Company*] lines take maybe seven—a week to a week and a half to get it here, but war materials are going to come first. That was top priority. So, sometimes, we don't have cooking oil. I remember my mother would always trade off some chickens and eggs for so much flour, so much oil. She likes to stock, and rice 'cause that's our staple food, yeah.

HY: Who would she trade with? With neighbors? Or with the store?

LY: No, with the store, yeah. And I guess, that's a age-old thing about trading. You know, what I have and you don't have, when times get rough, that's what they do. So everything was a trade-off. Shee.

HY: Did they continue to supply to Star Market and . . .

LY: Yeah. We were supplying Star Market until the early [19]50s. I was married and gone, but I know my brother used to deliver because when I come home for a visit, he said, "Oh, I got to go deliver," and he'll take it to Star Market.

HY: What about your egg delivery to neighbors? Did . . .

LY: Oh no, that stopped. Peddling stopped, yeah.

HY: Was that because of the war or was there . . .

LY: Mm hmm, mm hmm. War and, you know, when gasoline was rationed, even going to the market stopped. You know, that open market at `A`ala? Yeah, that stopped too.

And most of the eggs were marketed to the market. Forget what other—it was a Chinese market we used to take out to.

HY: Were you not allowed to go door-to-door with the eggs or . . .

LY: Oh, you could, but then we were older already and working. We didn't have time and the younger ones didn't want to do it, and I guess my folks never pushed. So, my brothers and I was the last. (Laughs)

Sometimes we got to `A`ala Market on a Sunday. We have to get up at 4:30 [A.M.], load up the truck, and we'll go, and if there's leftover eggs coming home, right around here, my dad would stop and my brother and I would run out and we'd go knocking till we sell all the eggs on the way home. And they were cheap. The eggs were fifty cents a dozen for large eggs, but you always ask for a bowl because you have 'em in the basket, and you just count twelve if they want a dozen or two, but they're nice, fresh eggs, yeah. (Sighs).

HY: Did that financially affect your parents' business or did they do as well?

LY: They did all right. My father, see, at that time, was still contracting. He didn't stop contracting until, I think about '51, '50 or '51, when he fell off that roof. And he would go out to work with my—my brother would help him, my brother that was a mechanic. He would help him. When he would leave his job or on his day off he would help my dad, and my mom ran the farm by herself with all the kids helping.

HY: Did his contracting business change during the war at all?

LY: No, he became busier in a way.

HY: He became busier?

LY: Yeah, he came busier.

HY: What kinds of things was he asked to build?

LY: He built ranch homes in . . .

HY: Residential?

(LY bumps microphone.)

LY: . . . and he also did repair work for private homes. And he also used to build cabinets and different, simple furniture like dining table, and benches, and even chairs. So he was pretty talented. He used to make dressers, too, with the mirror and all. I took one with me, but I'm getting married to a furniture man [*her husband's family owned the Yamada Furniture Store*], right? So, your grandma [*Lorraine Yamada's mother-in-law*] said, "When you come here, you don't have to bring anything, just bring your body." Bring my body.
(Laughs)

But when I went back the second time, see—when I first got married, I lived with them [*in-laws*] for a year and then I became pregnant. And I told Uncle [*Holly Yamada's uncle, Lorraine Yamada's husband*], "I'll live with your folks"—I didn't like the idea but I told him—"I'll live with them and help in the store, but if I became in a family way, you have to promise me, we're going to go out on our own."

He said, "Okay."

So when I became pregnant I said, "Oh, now we can live on our own." So he told his father that we were expecting. Oh, the father was happy.

And then he says, "But if I leave, I'm going to have an extra mouth to feed. So I can make a living on. . . ." He was making ninety cents an hour, I think.

HY: Working at the furniture store?

LY: Mm hmm. And when he asked for a raise, oh it became a big war. So he said, "Well, I'll just have to move out, I have to leave then."

Mom [*Lorraine Yamada's mother-in-law*—she was the one that was rough. "Yes! Get out!" So, we moved out, and we went back to Honolulu to live. We came back here, and we stayed here maybe two, going on three years when we were called back, so we went back. At that time I didn't want to go back. I told him, "I don't want to go back."

But he said, "I'll go first and I'll explain to them that we're not going to live together with them, because I went through enough already."

So he explained some of the things why I didn't want to live (with) them. 'Cause the older brother, ho, used to treat me like I was a second-class citizen.

I was probably extra sensitive, and I took it in too seriously. And I had this complex, too, you know, that they didn't like me because of my Okinawan ancestry.

So, I always had that feeling that they don't treat me the same. And your father would tell you. Because when I told him, "Tokio, you know, go get married and why don't you bring your wife here?"

And he said, "Lorraine, can you imagine? You just Okinawan and my mom said you're different. You're a different kind of person."

I said, "You're damn right I'm different, I'm better!" I told him.

(Laughter)

LY: He said, "So can you imagine if I brought a Caucasian wife?"

I said, "That's really too bad." So that was his decision that he would never bring your mom here.

HY: So you felt that they treated you differently because you were Okinawan?

LY: Oh, definitely! Definitely!

HY: What would they say?

LY: Oh, it's the way they talk, the way she look at me, follow me—"Be sure and wash that clean!" Or just little things.

HY: And yet they wanted you to stay?

LY: Yeah, and work in the store. That one year was the worst year, but I think it built character in me. I learned tolerance, yeah. So it wasn't all in vain. (Laughs) Yeah, I learned something good.

HY: Okay. I got to . . .

END OF INTERVIEW